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ABSTRACT

Two faculty members of the Division of Education at Neumann College (Pennsylvania) have collaborated in the development of a cooperative learning based teacher preparation curriculum in early childhood education and elementary education. At every level of pre-service training, students enrolled in these programs are exposed to activities, strategies, and assignments that incorporate cooperative learning. The curriculum is grounded in the relationship that is established between cooperative learning and the three domains of learning: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. Ultimately, students become fully engaged in recognizing when the application of cooperative learning to instruction is appropriate, why its application benefits the learner, and how to make the most effective application of it. (Contains 15 references.) (Author)

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COOPERATIVE LEARNING AND SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION: THE INTERSECTION OF THEORY AND PRACTICE AT NEUMANN COLLEGE

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COOPERATIVE LEARNING AND SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION: THE INTERSECTION OF THEORY AND PRACTICE AT NEUMANN COLLEGE

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Two faculty members of the Division of Education at Neumann College have collaborated in the development of a cooperative learning based teacher preparation curriculum in Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education. At every level of pre-service training, students enrolled in these programs are exposed to activities, strategies, and assignments that incorporate cooperative learning. The curriculum is grounded in the relationship that is established between cooperative learning and the three domains of learning, i.e., cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. Ultimately, students become fully engaged in recognizing when the application of cooperative learning to instruction is appropriate, why its application benefits the learner, and how to make the most effective application of it.

The approach taken by Neumann College faculty members acknowledges three widely accepted models of cooperative learning. From the work of Robert E. Slavin, the Neumann College curriculum takes its focus on academic achievement. Indeed, he concludes that "...cooperative methods can and usually do have a positive effect on student achievement (1989/1990)." The Neumann program encourages its pre-service students to learn to see themselves as appraisers; activities are designed to

allow students to evaluate their own effectiveness within a group and to determine the overall effectiveness of their cooperative learning groups in the pursuit of the completion of group assignments.

Another perspective of cooperative learning directed at the Neumann curriculum is the focus on the development of social skills. Taking its cues from Johnson and Johnson (1989) and Johnson, Johnson, and Maruyama (1983), Neumann asserts that, by definition, cooperative learning is a process that fosters scholarship through collaboration. Toward that end, pre-service students prepare and present instructional units that reflect the rich diversity of strengths of the members of the group. As group members interact and bond with each other during the course of a semester, they increasingly value the abilities and talents of their peers. Within the structure of their cooperative learning groups, members more and more capably apply their group roles (see "Cooperative Learning Roles and Responsibilities" in packet of information) to the positive exploitation of those abilities and talents. As put by Chung, "...collaboration locates knowledge in the community rather than in the individual..." (1991).

A third component of the Neumann curriculum synthesizes offerings from the likes of Sharan and Sharan (1989/1990) and Kohn (1991). Here the focus is on experiential learning. For Neumann College students, that means participating in concrete activities infused with the notion that the objective of the activity is to apply theory to practice. The byproduct derived from combining cooperative learning with experiential education is the recognition by students that observation and reflection are invaluable processes inherent to the growth of their pedagogical capabilities, a phenomenon whose outcome is upheld by Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin, and Hall in Taking Charge of Change (1987) and Gay in Developmental Perspectives on the Social Studies (1982). Consequently, students develop the ability to construct valid generalizations and to apply these generalizations to brand new situations, an ability not at all unlike the classic goals articulated by Beyer (1971), Bruner (1971), Dewey (1933), and Taba (1967).

Students who progress through the curriculum at Neumann College demonstrate achievement of five outcomes enumerated by Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec (1988). These outcomes are key to

enabling today's students in teacher preparation programs to become tomorrow's teachers capable of addressing the escalating number of demands upon educators who are about to enter classrooms of the twenty-first century. The five outcomes include:

1. mastery of interpersonal communication skills;
2. facility in critical thinking and reasoning ability;
3. refinement in written and spoken communication;
4. capacity to formulate and articulate problems;
5. willingness to accept change and make appropriate adaptations.

In addition to the kinds of global outcomes delineated above, a more specific array of pedagogical skills associated with the utilization of cooperative learning in higher education has been identified by the Neumann College faculty members responsible for the cooperative learning based curriculum. Responding to initiatives of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education, the authors have constructed a sequential, developmental curriculum in which cooperative learning facilitates accomplishments in several time-honored areas (see "Cognitive Structures of Cooperative Learning" and "Affective Structures of Cooperative Learning" in packet of information). Education majors who have completed their pre-service requirements exhibit positive changes academically and attitudinally, as measured by formal and informal evaluation instruments and from anecdotal data. Findings culled from the administration of the Educational Testing Service Major Field Achievement Test in Education, student self-evaluations, cooperative learning group profiles (see "Cooperative Learning Self-Evaluation and Group Evaluation Checklist" in packet of information), and Neumann College Student Rating of Classroom Teaching (this instrument measures students' perceptions of the effectiveness of their professors' teaching strategies) support the inferences drawn regarding positive growth in academic achievement and attitudinal development.

As a result of these findings, the Division of Education faculty members see their students, and students see themselves, as achievers both academically and attitudinally. It is noted that peer norms become more oriented toward intellectual growth, and recent literature supports this observation (Prescott, 1989-1990). Further, individual self-esteem and locus of control tend to shift from dependent and compliant to supportive and creative as pre-service students accept the conviction that they are valuable and important. These conclusions are substantiated by Slavin in Cooperative Learning: Theory, Research, and Practice (1990). Students also recognize that such seemingly disparate issues as intergroup relations and time-on-task are readily facilitated by the judicious application of cooperative learning.

Students who complete the program at Neumann College recognize that they are capable of embarking upon a successful career in teaching. They come to know that they do, can, and will enable learning for themselves and for others by:

- identifying, selecting, and implementing the cooperative learning structure best suited for a proposed instructional activity;
- fostering and nurturing the growth of self-confidence;
- negotiating group interactions;
- mediating strategies for self-evaluation; and
- screening content to be explored and examined by other students in relation to their own interests and needs.

The following six pages constitute a packet of information developed by the authors of this paper and presented in an interactive session entitled "Cooperative Learning and Social Studies Education: The Intersection of Theory and Practice at Neumann College" at the 1993 Middle States Regional Social Studies Conference. The first of these six pages provides an advanced organizer for participants attending the session as it allows them to detail the components highlighted in the outline. The second

page, "Cooperative Learning Roles and Responsibilities of Group Members," depicts the type of internal structure of a cooperative learning group proposed by the session presenters. The suggested roles and responsibilities were assumed by session participants as they engaged in a variety of simulations used to illustrate the Neumann curriculum. The third and fourth pages of the packet provide descriptions of the sequential and developmental nature of the curriculum and its close affiliation to the domains of learning stated at the outset of this paper. The fifth page represents an example of the kind of activity designed to promote the outcomes of the curriculum, and this page is followed by the "Cooperative Learning Self-Evaluation and Group Evaluation Checklist," a self and group evaluation instrument administered at the conclusion of every cooperative learning activity.

COOPERATIVE LEARNING AND SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION: THE INTERSECTION OF THEORY AND PRACTICE AT NEUMANN COLLEGE

I. Theoretical Rationale

II. Widely Accepted Approaches

III. Expected Outcomes

IV. Roles of the Teacher

V. Roles of the Pupil

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COOPERATIVE LEARNING

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF GROUP MEMBERS

INTRODUCTION

Cooperative Learning is a strategy and a process. As a strategy, it offers an alternative to conventional approaches to classroom management. As a process, it provides a context in which learners assume responsibility for their own learning and have the opportunity to achieve to their maximum potential.

THE CONTEXT

Ideally, cooperative learning groups will consist of five learners per group. Upon designating the groups, the teacher should point out that each group member will fill a specific function. For the group to function successfully as a whole, each member must assume responsibility for fulfilling one of the following roles (Initially, the roles may be assigned by the teacher; however, roles may be determined during the first few minutes of group organization by the members themselves.):

1.) the *reporter:* tells the rest of the class the conclusions and ideas of the group;

2.) the *recorder:* records ideas, answers, and opinions of the group;

3.) the *facilitator:* makes sure that everyone in the group contributes to the group effort; makes sure that group makes effective use of time;

4.) the *evaluator:* rates the total group effort and reports on the individual contributions of the group members to the group effort;

5.) the *observer:* notes who tried to mediate, to inform, to impose order or opinions, to keep the group on task.

IMPLICATIONS

Not only is cooperative learning a process in taking responsibility, but it is also a process in democracy. Once learners have mastered the meanings of the roles and the concept of cooperative learning, roles can be shifted, new tasks can be assigned, and projects can be completed.

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3/27/93

COGNITIVE STRUCTURES OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING

LEVEL	BEHAVIOR
knowledge	identify concepts of cooperative learning
comprehension	organize a cooperative learning group
application	prepare and present an assignment
analysis	reassign roles in order to enhance effectiveness of the group process
synthesis	administer assessment
evaluation	conduct self-evaluation and group profile

AFFECTIVE STRUCTURES OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING

LEVEL	BEHAVIOR
receiving	express an interest in participating in a cooperative learning group
responding	develop an organizational structure for a cooperative learning group
valuing	participate in the preparation and presentation of a group assignment
organizing	explain and justify the usefulness of cooperative learning in completing the task
characterization	demonstrate willingly the initiative to continue using cooperative learning

NEUMANN COLLEGE
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EDU 305, Methods and Materials Fall, 1992

Mid-semester Group Activity

PURPOSE:

This group activity is intended to synthesize and illustrate your comprehension of selected theoretical aspects of the course and your ability to apply this comprehension to a practical circumstance.

ACTIVITY:

In groups of four or five, identify problems in classroom management that may arise during the implementation of cooperative learning in Social Studies classrooms. After verifying your understanding of cooperative learning and classroom management, your group will develop a scenario. Development of the scenario will involve creating a setting in which a specific cooperative learning activity is taking place. For instance, a social studies activity is being presented in which your students are creating their own nations and are deadlocked over the kinds of governments to establish. Develop the scenario in the form of a script or screen-play, so that the lines of the teacher, student, and any other participant are clearly recognized. Develop the action (plot) in the form of stage directions interspersed between the lines of the participants.

ANALYSIS:

Your scenarios will be distributed to the class, and samples of them will be acted out and videotaped.

EVALUATION:

Application and synthesis of your knowledge of the rationale of cooperative learning, the roles of pupils in cooperative learning, and the relationship of rationale and roles to classroom management constitute the variables that will be assessed in this activity.

Be creative, and apply all of your knowledge!!!

COOPERATIVE LEARNING SELF-EVALUATION AND GROUP EVALUATION CHECKLIST

DIRECTIONS: Listed below are ten criteria to be used in evaluating your contribution toward the effort of the group in completing the group assignment. Rate each of the criteria by placing a check in the grid according to the following scale:

U (unsatisfactory)
S (satisfactory)
O (outstanding)

The group evaluator will then collect your checklist and compile a group profile evaluation.

	RATING		
	U	S	O
MOTIVATION			
PREPAREDNESS			
COMPLETENESS			
CREATIVITY			
COOPERATION			
ORGANIZATION			
OPENNESS			
SENSITIVITY			
DEPENDABILITY			
OTHER (_____)			

Savitz and Yoder, 3/27/93

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